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Drugs, Warren Report, Bail Bonding Discussed

Connick, Scaccia, Ward, Trice Give Talks

Four candidates for district attorney discussed narcotics, the Warren Report and the bail bonding problem in New Orleans during a long and at times heated session at the Aurora Country Club Tuesday night.

Three of the four democratic candidates, Harry Connick, Ross Scaccia and Charles R. Ward took part in the meeting before the members of the Kiwanis Club of Algiers and the Aurora Civic Association.

Although invited to attend DA Jim Garrison was not at the meeting.

The fourth candidate for district attorney at the meeting was the Republican candidate Phil Trice, making one of his rare public appearances.

ASSAILS DR. MEAD

"Dr. Margaret Mead should stick to anthropology," Connick told the group.

Discussing the prosecution of narcotics offenders, Connick disputed Dr. Mead's recent statement that marijuana is not harmful and should be made legal for anyone over 16.

He said if elected DA he would prosecute individuals who sell narcotics, whether it is heroin or marijuana.

Connick said however that he would support a broader methadone program within the city.

Scadcia said that as DA he would enforce the laws against illegal use of drugs, but asked the audience what they as parents are going to do about the reasonableness and fairness of the laws.

"We don't know enough about marijuana today," he said.

BAIL BONDING

Ward said he favored a program involving education and rehabilition to combat the illegal use of drugs, with a methadone program for the "hardened criminals."

Trice made it plain that as district attorney his function would not include becoming involved in investigating drug abuses, but in prosecuting such cases.

As to the methadone program, Trice again said his function as district attorney would be to prosecute those charged with narcotics crimes.

On the matter of bail bonding, Connick said incumbent DA Jim Garrison failed to collect on $1.2 million in forfeited bail bonds over a four-year period.

REALISTIC BONDS

He said as district attorney he would work for setting realistic bonds and collecting forfeited bonds.

Ward said that insurance companies should be eliminated from the criminal court practice.

"The profit making motive does not belong in criminal law," he said.

Scaccia however charged that the bail bonding issue had been over enlarged.

He suggested that the overcrowded conditions in Parish Prison went hand-in-hand" with the bond issue and one could not be divorced from the other.

WARREN REPORT

As to the validity of the Warren Report, Trice said "anything with Earl Warren's name on it couldn't be the truth."

"But," he continued, "it is a matter of Jim Garrison holding back the truth here."

Agreeing basically with the Warren Report, Connick said he did not fault Garrison for his beliefs but he did question his proceeding with the Clay Shaw case when he knew or should have known that he had no evidence to try the case.

Ward and Scaccia also attacked Garrison and his handling of the case.

One of the light spots in the otherwise heated exchange between the candidates came from Trice.

ASSESSOR HOPEFULS

Asked to summarize his position in the district attorney race, the Republican candidate asked the audience, "How much would you have bet in 1968 on a three-way parley that the Jets would win the Super Bowl, the Mets would win the World Series and that we would place two men on the moon?"

Following the DA candidates James W. Smith and State Sen. Olaf Fink, candidates for assessor from Algiers, spoke with the group.

Smith, who is the son-in-law of present Algiers assessor Joseph C. Modenbach launched an attack at Fink, accusing him of trying to get away with an unfair assessment on a piece of his own property.

CHARGE MADE

However, after Fink said he had paid the proper assessment, Smith checked back over his figures and apologized.

Fink charged that Modenbach had qualified to run for assessor knowing that he would not be in the election in the end.

"I qualified to run for assessor," Fink said, "to give the people a choice. Otherwise Mr. Smith would have been your assessor with only one vote."

Smith's wife and Modenbach were both in the audience and for a few minutes heated argument took place between Fink, Mrs. Smith and Modenbach, which centered on Modenbach's "dynasty" in the Algiers assessor's office.